

Guide & Resources

HEAD START CULTURAL COMPETENCE PROJECT

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The children and families of La Preciosita whose generosity and gracious hospitality provided me with invaluable insight into their culture, language and daily experience.

– Deb Kalwat, Author
2009 NC Head Start Collaboration Special Projects Intern

Foreword

The NC Head Start-State Collaboration Office is pleased to share the content of this resource manual with the Head Start and Early Head Start grantees in the State. As we endeavor to offer the best comprehensive services available to children birth to 5 of greatest need and their families, we must be properly positioned to reach all of the children and families who are eligible for our unique brand of service.

The demographic of eligible families in North Carolina is growing increasingly diverse; and Head Start and Early Head Start programs have a mandate to tailor all aspects of their services to meet the ever-changing needs of these families. This resource manual is a tool designed to assist your program with developing Cultural Competence. From culturally sensitive practice in the classroom to program governance, this resource manual will equip any program to effectively deliver Head Start and Early Head Start services to children and families from diverse backgrounds.

The content of this resource manual was derived from the integrated research and immersion experiences of Deb Kalwat – a 2009 Head Start Collaboration Office Special Projects Intern.

Khari M. Garvin, M.Ed.,
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Head Start CULTURAL COMPETENCE PROJECT

We become not a melting pot but a beautiful mosaic. Different people, different beliefs, different yearnings, different hopes, different dreams.

– Jimmy Carter, (U.S. President)

INTRODUCTION

Since 1965, Head Start has delivered high quality services designed to foster healthy development in low-income children. Head Start services are responsive and appropriate to each child and family's developmental, ethnic, cultural, and linguistic heritage and experience. This resource is designed to support Head Start program staff's ability to recognize the importance of cultural competency when working with immigrant families and in meeting the goals mandated in the Head Start Performance Standards. It provides some answers to questions such as: "What competencies will be required of staff working with children and families?" "What training will benefit staff in their work with diverse populations?" "What hiring practices will support the needs of the changing communities?" "What are effective recruitment and enrollment practices?" "How can governing bodies support and promote cultural competence?"

BACKGROUND

Picture yourself in a foreign country...no one nearby is dressed like you...you cannot understand the signs, food menus and conversations you overhear. This is the everyday life experienced by thousands of immigrant adults and children.

The United States is a country characterized by a complex blend of culture, ethnicity, race, language, religion, age, gender, exceptionality and other factors. Adapting to a new culture and language can be difficult even for people moving within the dominant culture. It is even more difficult for those who come to the United States from other countries.

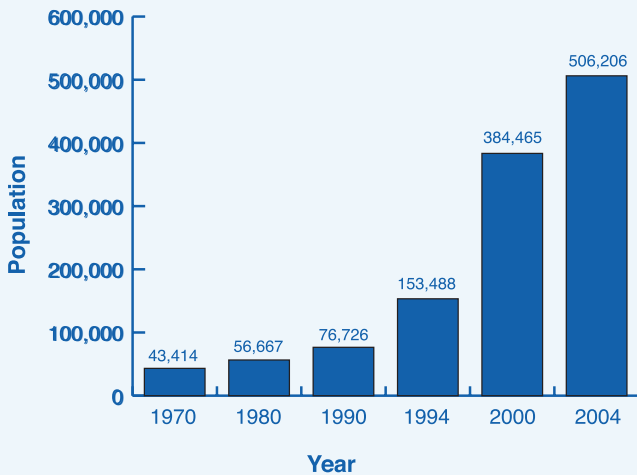
According to the Census completed in 2000, this “foreign-born”¹ population is growing rapidly. Between 1990 and 2000, the foreign-born population across the United States increased by 57%. Of these, 52% were from Latin American regions including Central America, South America and the Caribbean.² Most (30%) of these newcomers came from Mexico. China, with 4.9% and the Philippines with 4.4% were the next largest sources.³ The following table shows the foreign-born population by country of birth.

TOP TEN COUNTRIES OF BIRTH OF THE FOREIGN-BORN POPULATION: 2000		
Country of Birth	Number	% of foreign-born population
Total foreign-born	31,107,889	100
Top ten countries	18,157,587	58.4
Mexico	9,177,487	29.5
China	1,518,652	4.9
Philippines	1,369,070	4.4
India	1,022,552	3.3
Vietnam	988,174	3.2
Cuba	872,716	2.8
Korea	864,125	2.8
Canada	820,771	2.6
El Salvador	817,336	2.6
Germany	706,704	2.3
All other countries	12,950,302	41.6

Until recently, half of the foreign born population lived in three states: California, Texas and New York.⁴ When combined with populations in Florida, New Jersey and Illinois, a full 68% of the immigrants lived in just six states.⁵ Since the 2000 Census, the population has been shifting to states that did not, historically,

¹ The Census Bureau considers anyone not born a U. S. citizen to be foreign born. Census 2000 Brief Issued December 2003, p. 1; ² Source: U. S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 1 and Summary File 3; 1990 Census of Population, General Population Characteristics (CP-2-1); ³ Census 2000 Brief, p. 2; ⁴ Census 2000 Brief, p. 5; ⁵ Census 2000 Brief, p. 5

NORTH CAROLINA



receive high percentages of immigrants. From 1990 to 2000, increases in three states were more than 200%. Nevada, for example, showed an increase of 202%, Georgia an increase of 233% and North Carolina an increase of 274%.⁶

Most of the immigrants in North Carolina are of Hispanic⁷ origin. In 2000, Hispanics made up 4.7% of the state's population.⁸

A report published in 2007

showed an increase to 7.0%.⁹ In large part, our growing Hispanic population originates in many Central and South American countries as well as Cuba and Puerto Rico.¹⁰ Some come as a result of civil unrest but most are seeking better education and economic opportunities.

The Hispanic population also grows as a result of high birth rates. In fact, there are almost twice as many Hispanic children under the age of five than in the general population of the state¹¹ (see chart below). This number is expected to increase by 146% by 2050. Many of these children come from homes where English is not spoken well or is not spoken at all.¹² Their families are more likely to be employed in lower paying jobs and to live in poverty than any other racial or ethnic groups.¹³ Given the rapid growth of the Hispanic population, the limited English language proficiency of their families, and their overall economic status, these children require access to high quality programs and services.

⁶ Census 2000 Brief, p. 5; ⁷ The terms Hispanic and Latino are used interchangeably throughout this document.; ⁸ United States Census Bureau, 1990. Web site: <http://www.census.gov/>; ⁹ U. S. Census Bureau: State and County QuickFacts. May 2009.; ¹⁰ While people from Puerto Rico are U. S. Citizens, migrating to North Carolina presents many of the same cultural adaptation challenges as people of immigrant groups.; ¹¹ US Census Bureau. Census 2000 Summary File 1 (SF1) 100-Percent Data. Table P12. Sex by Age.; ¹² Census 2000 Table 35b. North Carolina : Ability to Speak English by Language Spoken at Home for the Population 18 Years and Over : October 2004.; ¹³ US Census Bureau. Census 2000 Summary File 3 (SF-3) Sample Data. P155B. H. I. Median Family Income 199.

NORTH CAROLINA BIRTHS BY RACE/ETHNICITY 1990 AND 2003

	1990	2003	% Change
All Races	104,525	18,308	13.2
White	69,512	70,458	1.4
Black	30,726	27,170	-11.6
American Indian	1,516	1,637	8.0
Asian/Pacific Islander	1,052	3,106	195.2
Hispanic	1,754	16,084	817.0

Recently, program expansion opportunities were made available to Head Start, Early Head Start, and Migrant/Seasonal Head Start programs by means of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. North Carolina Head Start and Early Head Start¹⁴ programs will have to overcome many challenges in their efforts to increase access and improve programming for the Hispanic and immigrant population. Program services will need to be supported by bilingual staff members who understand the educational and service needs of Hispanic children and families. Programs will need to consider new approaches to language and literacy, developmental screenings and assessments, family support and parent involvement, and recruitment. Changes to the classroom environment, health, nutrition and mental health services and in Head Start staff may need to be considered as well.

Change at this level requires that your program embrace the rich tapestry of cultures and languages in our communities. To accomplish this, staff in your program will need to develop “cultural competence.” This is critical for all Head Start staff because it applies to all program services. Head Start’s commitment to serving diverse populations began with its founding principles in 1965 and continues to be reflected in the Head Start Performance Standards, Information Memorandums, and Program Instructions issued today. This commitment to serving diverse populations in culturally and linguistically appropriate ways must be achieved on the individual, program and community levels. Building cultural competence is a complex process that requires careful self-assessment designed

¹⁴ Throughout this manual, “Head Start” is used to include both the Early Head Start and Head Start programs unless otherwise noted.

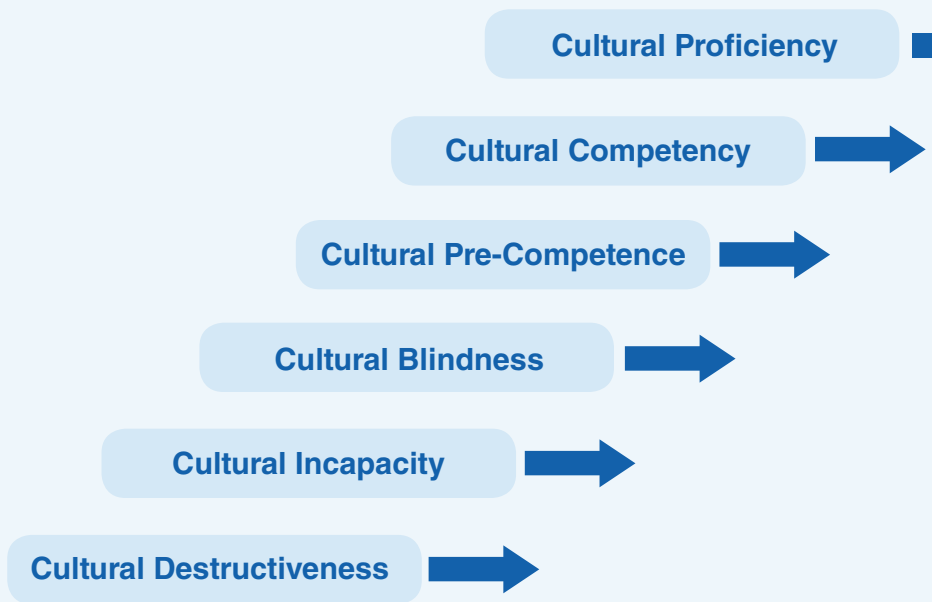
to identify the unique recruitment and service needs of changing populations. It also requires the willingness and dedication to change attitudes, behaviors and policies. The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) defines cultural competence as follows:

“Cultural competence refers to the process by which individuals and systems respond respectfully and effectively to people of all cultures, languages, classes, races, ethnic backgrounds, religions, and other diversity factors in a manner that recognizes, affirms, and values the worth of individuals, families, and communities and protects and preserves the dignity of each.”¹⁵

The idea of employing culturally relevant policies, attitudes, and practices in programs is not limited to Head Start. Cultural competence principles are used at all levels of education, health, social work and other types of human services. The NASW reports a shift from traditional emphasis on race and ethnicity as the dominant cultural factors to a broader understanding. It regards cultural competence as an ongoing process that occurs over a continuum¹⁶ (see diagram below). As people move along the continuum, they build expertise in responding “respectfully and effectively to people of all cultures, languages, classes, races, ethnic backgrounds, religions and other diversity factors”¹⁷. It has been theorized that, “at best, most human service agencies providing services to children and families fall between Cultural Incapacity and Cultural Blindness on the continuum.” It is likely that many Head Start programs (and others serving young children) fall in the same place on the continuum. Before you can answer the question, “How can my program develop cultural competence?” your program must use the self-assessment process to identify where each program component is situated along the cultural competence continuum. The information learned from the self-assessment can then be used to plan program improvements and training.

¹⁵ NASW Standards for Cultural Competence, 2001, p. 11; ¹⁶ Cross T., Bazron, B., Dennis, K., & Isaacs, M. (1989). Towards a culturally competent system of care, volume I. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Child Development Center, CASSP Technical Assistance Center.; ¹⁷ National Association of Social Workers. (2000b). Cultural competence in the social work profession. In Social work speaks: NASW policy statements (pp. 5 – 62). Washington, DC: NASW Press.

CULTURAL COMPETENCE CONTINUUM



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE EDUCATION OF YOUNG CHILDREN CULTURAL COMPETENCE ASSESSMENT TOOL

The National Association for the Education of Young Children recently undertook the task of developing a tool to measure the level of cultural competence within early childhood programs. This could be a useful resource to guide your program's cultural competence self-assessment. The premise of the project is that, "Educators must accept the legitimacy of children's home language, respect (hold in high regard) the home culture, and promote and encourage the active involvement and support of all families, including extended and nontraditional family units." (NAEYC, 1995, 2). The outcome of the project is a matrix based on seven culturally competent practices in early childhood educational settings. The seven practices are as follows:

1. Acknowledge that children are nested in families and communities with unique strengths. Recognize and mitigate the tension between the early childhood profession's perceptions of the child as the center of the work versus the family as the center of the work.

2. Build on and identify the strengths and shared goals between the profession and families and recognize commonalities in order to meet these goals.
3. Understand and authentically incorporate the traditions and history of the program participants and their impacts on child-rearing practices.
4. Actively support each child's development within the family as complex and culturally-driven ongoing experiences.
5. Recognize and demonstrate awareness that individuals' and institutions' practices are embedded in culture.
6. Ensure that decisions and policies regarding all aspects of a program embrace and respect participants' language, values, attitudes, beliefs and approaches to learning.
7. Ensure that policies and practices build upon the home languages and dialects of the children, families and staff in programs and support the preservation of home languages.

It is understood that programs will start at various points on the matrix and will develop in different areas at different rates. Strategies for implementation are included in the matrix to support programs in building cultural competence. Competence of the child, family, and program staff is the focus of the measurement tool. The "tool is a framework for moving the field forward and embedding and integrating the concepts of cultural competence into one existing policy." A copy of the complete tool is available at: http://www.naeyc.org/files/naeyc/file/policy/state/QBCC_Tool.pdf

THE ROLE OF CULTURAL COMPETENCE IN HEAD START

Cultural competence plays an important role in Head Start. It empowers administrators, teachers, family advocates, and all other staff members to better see how their actions affect children and families representing diverse cultures. It is a journey of self-discovery in which people become more aware of their attitudes, stereotypes and biases towards people of different cultures. Cultural competence opens pathways to understanding different values, beliefs, and traditions; and through this understanding it helps build a community of mutual respect. True cultural competence results in both policies and programs that are responsive to the needs of diverse children and families.

Head Start Performance Standards that address cultural competencies are reflected in the 1991 Head Start Information Memorandum: Multicultural Principles for Head Start Programs. These principles are quoted below:

1. **Every individual is rooted in culture.** Culture is everything that contributes to the life of a group of people, from the objects in their daily experiences to their customs and beliefs...a set of rules that governs group and individual experiences of the world and (sometimes unconsciously) provides the reason for actions and behavior. Culture affects how people perceive ideas and what they value and devalue.
2. **The cultural groups represented in the communities and families of each Head Start program are the primary sources for culturally relevant programming.** Culturally diverse programming idealizes and builds upon that which is most familiar to children and valued by significant others in their lives, namely aspects of each family's own language and culture. Cultural relevance enhances learning by extending children's experiences more fully to include the home environment.
3. **Culturally relevant and diverse programming requires learning accurate information about the culture of different groups and discarding stereotypes.** Individuals at every level of Head Start should make a commitment to improve their programs by acquiring accurate information about cultural groups, by examining institutional and personal biases, and by discarding stereotypes and misinformation.
4. **Addressing cultural relevance in making curriculum choices is a necessary, developmentally appropriate practice.** Children are more open to learning when their cultures are respected and reflected within all aspects of the Head Start program. Acquisition of new skills is embedded within the process of cultural programming. Children learn about their culture as they progress in all the other aspects of development.
5. **Each individual has the right to maintain his or her own identity while acquiring the skills required to function in our diverse society.** A culturally relevant program enhances each person's development. Children more readily learn new skills required to cope with diversity. A program that recognizes and honors the child's and family's language and cultural identity contributes greatly to a child's

self-esteem and to the development of a clear and positive personal and social identity.

- 6. Effective programs for children with limited English speaking ability require continued development of the primary language while the acquisition of English is facilitated.** Children whose primary language is not English may need special attention. Children acquire a first or primary language from their families and the people who care for them. Language acquisition is a natural process based on discovering meanings perceived in conversation and facilitated by significant adults.
- 7. Culturally relevant programming requires staffs who reflect the community and families served.** Incorporating cultural relevancy and providing staff who speak the primary language of enrolled children and families lay a foundation for a good Head Start program.
- 8. Multicultural programming for children enables children to develop an awareness of, respect for, and appreciation of individual cultural differences. Multicultural programming is beneficial to all children.** Very concrete experiences that celebrate individual differences contribute to children's natural understanding and acceptance of and respect for others who appear different from them.
- 9. Culturally relevant and diverse programming examines and challenges institutional and personal biases.** Institutional and personal biases are values or practices that favor one group or culture by race, sex, income, physical attributes, or age. Institutional biases are reflected in practices and behaviors of the dominant group that devalue minority groups and cultures. Institutional biases can be reflected in program design.
- 10. Culturally relevant and diverse programming and practices are incorporated in all components and services.** Head Start is a comprehensive program in which all components affect services to children and families. Cultural differences, stereotypes, and biases can be found in all components, not just educational services.

For a full overview and discussion points on the Head Start Multicultural Principles, visit the Early Learning and Knowledge Center (ECLKC) at www.eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc.

WHAT KEY PRACTICES WILL CHARACTERIZE CULTURALLY COMPETENT HEAD START PROGRAMS?

1. Community assessments and program self-assessments will be accurate and detailed in their investigation of the cultures of children and families who qualify for services.
2. Recruitment and enrollment practices will be tailored to meet the needs of targeted populations and be culturally and linguistically sensitive.
3. Family Advocates will use cultural competencies at the high end of the continuum when developing Family Partnership Agreements and when providing crisis services.
4. Health, Nutrition, and Mental Health service providers will also use highly developed cultural competency skills. Referral processes for disabilities, health, mental health and other human services will result in culturally and linguistically appropriate assistance.
5. Across program services, written and spoken communications will be culturally and linguistically sensitive.
6. The curriculum, classroom environment and learning experiences will respect, reflect and incorporate the cultures of children served.
7. Child assessments and individualized plans for children will be culturally and linguistically appropriate.
8. Human Resource recruitment and hiring practices will reflect the cultures of the families and children served.
9. Professional Development and Training will be designed and implemented to support the continual growth in cultural competency skills for all employees.
10. Community Partnerships will be established with agencies and other resource programs that function at a high level on the continuum.

On the following pages you will find tables that are designed to provide snapshots of cultural beliefs, values, attitudes and practices, as well as examples of key practices that are sensitive and responsive. The tables are organized by program component to assist you and your Head Start colleagues in identifying relevant items that refer to specific policies or practices. Additional spaces are provided for you to use in articulating information and practices specific to your program.

Cultural Snapshots and Key Practices

FOR HEAD START PROGRAMS

CHILD HEALTH, SAFETY AND DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES

- **CULTURAL SNAPSHOT:** Cultural and religious beliefs often mean that Hispanic families attribute good health to God's blessings. Preventative care may not be utilized or understood.

KEY PRACTICES FOR HEAD START PROGRAMS: Preventative care may not be sought out by Latino families as they tend to consider good health to be a blessing rather than something they have control over. Provide carefully designed workshops on the benefits of various preventative care routines such as well child examinations, immunizations and breast examinations.

- **CULTURAL SNAPSHOT:** Home remedies are a common and effective approach to treating injuries and illnesses. Latino families tend to seek professional medical care only in emergency situations. Cultural health resources may include:

- Curanderismo: a medical system combining Aztec, Spanish, spiritualistic, homeopathic and scientific elements.
- Curandero: a holistic healer with religious orientation who might help people with social, physical, and psychological issues.

KEY PRACTICES FOR HEAD START PROGRAMS: Be respectful of the homeopathic, spiritualistic and scientific elements of the Hispanic community healers. Encourage families to seek professional medical care when necessary by explaining the reasons that such care might be advisable. Refer families to health care providers who are culturally and linguistically sensitive.

- **CULTURAL SNAPSHOT:** The three most significant barriers to Hispanic families receiving culturally and linguistically appropriate health care are language, lack of insurance and/or payment resources and lack of transportation. In addition, some Hispanic families are not aware of available services.

KEY PRACTICES FOR HEAD START PROGRAMS: Work with your program's Health Advisory Committee and community resources to develop a comprehensive list of service providers in your area. Provide the list to families during the application, enrollment and program orientation processes. Determine if the family has access to insurance. If not, assist in addressing financial needs.

- **CULTURAL SNAPSHOT:** Hispanic families may have little or no experience with professional dental health services.

KEY PRACTICES FOR HEAD START PROGRAMS: Explain to families that the Head Start program requires that each child have a dental examination. Help the family find a dentist who will understand and respond to the family's cultural and language needs.

- **CULTURAL SNAPSHOT:** Families may not have documentation of health or dental health services. The concept of "continuous health care" may not be familiar to people of some cultural backgrounds.

KEY PRACTICES FOR HEAD START PROGRAMS: Be prepared to accept that the family may not have any documentation of professional medical and dental care. Explain Head Start requirements and help the family establish a medical and dental home. For undocumented families, interview the parents and grandparents to learn anecdotal information about pre-natal care and well child care including any immunizations the child has had.

- **CULTURAL SNAPSHOT:** Latino families may have difficulty negotiating our complex health care system. Barriers may include language, fear if the family is undocumented, cultural beliefs about health care, a lack of transportation and being unfamiliar with locations in the community.

KEY PRACTICES FOR HEAD START PROGRAMS: Ensure access to medical and dental care by Latino families by connecting them to professionals who understand and respect the family's language and culture. Provide the family with

transportation or give the family specific directions and assistance for using public transportation systems.

- **CULTURAL SNAPSHOT:** Typically, families may be familiar only with the national health concerns and information available in their own countries through newspapers and magazines written in their native language. They may not be fully aware of the health priorities and preventative practices being addressed in the United States.

KEY PRACTICES FOR HEAD START PROGRAMS: Schedule a series of health workshops to inform parents about approaches to health care in the United States. Topics for workshops might include lead poisoning, immunizations, baby bottle tooth decay and so on. Consider scheduling these sessions in conjunction with a mid-day meal prepared by the participants.

- **CULTURAL SNAPSHOT:** Cultural values and traditions may affect the way Hispanic women view pre-natal care and birth. Women are attended by close female relatives or midwives. Men do not typically attend the birth and don't see the wife or child until afterward. Traditionally, the mother may spend time at home following the birth of a child.

KEY PRACTICES FOR HEAD START PROGRAMS: Be sensitive and open to the expectant mother's attitudes and beliefs regarding pregnancy and birth. Provide information that is culturally and linguistically sensitive. When making referrals to health care providers, be sure that they understand and respect the culture and values of the family.

- **CULTURAL SNAPSHOT:** Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, lead poisoning and quality prenatal care are just a few of the community health issues facing Latino families. One study of two prenatal care clinics in North Carolina indicated that services for Hispanic women were perceived as culturally and linguistically inappropriate and in some cases made it necessary for older children and friends to explain information given by doctors.

KEY PRACTICES FOR HEAD START PROGRAMS: Utilize your program's Health Advisory Committee and community resources to develop a list of clinics and physicians that can provide culturally and linguistically appropriate prenatal, obstetric and postnatal services to Latino mothers.

■ **CULTURAL SNAPSHOT:** Hispanic families may not be accustomed to using safety equipment such as car seats, bicycle helmets, home safety locks and other items used routinely in the United States. Parents may not be aware of the State laws requiring child restraint systems in vehicles or the danger of leaving children unattended in cars.

KEY PRACTICES FOR HEAD START PROGRAMS: Provide families with information (in the native language) about state and Federal laws requiring child restraint systems in vehicles. Assist families in acquiring and properly installing age-appropriate car and booster seats. Offer workshops in home safety practices such as locking cleaning and other chemical products, covering electrical outlets, installing and maintaining fire alarms, and so on.

■ **CULTURAL SNAPSHOT:** Latino families, particularly those from Mexico and equatorial regions, may not fully understand the risks of operating kerosene heaters and other space heaters.

KEY PRACTICES FOR HEAD START PROGRAMS: Provide families with linguistically appropriate space heating safety information. Encourage families to plan and practice emergency procedures in their homes. Use brochures, parent workshops and other media to provide information about developing home safety and emergency plans.

Health Issues and the Hispanic Community

According to the Office of Minority Health Disparities (OMHD), major health issues faced by the Hispanic population include asthma, obesity, heart diseases, diabetes, and tuberculosis. Heart diseases and diabetes are among the top ten causes of death among Hispanics. Compared to whites, Hispanics are more than twice as likely to have diabetes. Women are less likely to receive early prenatal care. In addition, this population is less likely to have health insurance.¹⁸

¹⁸ Health, United States, 2008, U. S. Department of Health & Human Services Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics.

Obesity

Obesity is a common health care issue among Latinos. In some Latino cultures, being plump is an ideal and being thin may be seen as a sign of poor health. It is common for Latino mothers to regard heavier infants as healthy. Cultural values, unhealthy eating habits and other factors such as the cost of healthier foods have resulted in more than 20% of Latino people being either overweight or obese. Latino children under the age of 15 are ranked highest among all obese groups. Since obesity is linked with diabetes and heart disease, program staff must be aware of this health risk and provide culturally and linguistically appropriate information and services designed to build awareness of the problem and involve children and families in programs that address diet, nutrition and physical activity.

Cancer

Cultural beliefs and values can also impact way that some Hispanic women may approach the issue of breast cancer. Modesty is highly valued in the culture. Even if a woman discovers a lump in her breast, she may ignore it out of a feeling of shame. She and her husband may feel uncomfortable about letting a male doctor examine her breasts. Culturally sensitive information about the preventative benefits of mammograms is important when working with Hispanic families. Be sure to use community resources familiar with the cultural values of this population when hosting health information events and making referrals to physicians.

Health Risks to Migrant/Seasonal Workers

A significant number (eighty-five percent) of immigrant and migrant agricultural workers are foreign-born. Of these, ninety percent are from Latin America. Farm workers are at risk for back, neck, shoulder and knee injuries, exposure to pesticides, and injuries from farm equipment. A less well known agricultural risk is Green Tobacco Sickness (GTS), which is characterized by headache, nausea, vomiting and dizziness. Irregular heart rhythm, changes in blood pressure, and muscular weakness are additional symptoms. GTS is highly prevalent in North Carolina, especially as family tobacco farms are being consolidated into larger commercial enterprises resulting in larger groups of migrant workers being employed. It is caused by the absorption of nicotine through the skin of workers. Farm workers typically hold ripe

tobacco leaves under their arms, an area which absorbs chemicals more readily than other skin regions. Only a small number of GTS victims seek medical care. Some fear that missing work will result in the loss of the job.

Children and adolescents working in tobacco fields are also at risk for GTS. It is possible that nicotine poisoning among children and adolescents goes unrecognized by health practitioners.²⁰ Since their body mass is lower than that of adults, children may be particularly susceptible to nicotine poisoning. Protective clothing is sometimes recommended as a precaution but might contribute to heat exhaustion and dehydration. Education about the causes, signs, symptoms and prevention of green tobacco sickness is important, especially for populations of migrant agricultural workers and their children. More information and public educational resources about this health risk is available at <http://www.pubmedcentral.nih.gov>, <http://www.nclabor.com>, or <http://philipmorrisinternational.com>.

EDUCATION AND EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

Parent Involvement in Education

■ **CULTURAL SNAPSHOT:** Many Latino parents regard teachers as “experts” and may be reluctant to think of themselves as the “primary teacher” of their children.

KEY PRACTICES FOR HEAD START PROGRAMS: Begin by learning about chores done by children around the house that offer opportunities for children to practice what they learn in the Head Start program. For example, counting bowls for dinner, matching socks and other typical daily chores are important activities that can reinforce skills.

■ **CULTURAL SNAPSHOT:** Parents want their children to learn to speak English. Parents want their children to speak Spanish. These desires are not contradictory to one another.

KEY PRACTICES FOR HEAD START PROGRAMS: Encourage parents to continue to support their child’s learning of the home language. Suggest that the parents speak Spanish to the child at home if, in your classroom, mostly English is

²⁰ Green Tobacco Sickness in Children and Adolescents, Robert H. McKnight, ScDMPH and Henry A. Siller, MS, D.ABAT,

spoken. For more information about supporting bilingualism in children, refer to: Head Start English Language Learners Bulletin Number 78 which is available at <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov>

- **CULTURAL SNAPSHOT:** Latino cultural values, beliefs and practices are as complex and integrated as those of any other culture. They influence the ways parents and children perceive and respond to Head Start program services including education.

KEY PRACTICES FOR HEAD START PROGRAMS: Learn all you can about the family's values, beliefs and practices. Religion, gender, personal relationships, education, the value placed on children, child-rearing practices, attitudes toward health and mental health services and their degree of acculturation into the dominant U. S. culture, among other factors, will all affect the way families perceive and respond to Head Start program services.

- **CULTURAL SNAPSHOT:** Hispanic family ties are very important. Families often gather to celebrate religious milestones such as baptisms, first communions and weddings. Birthdays and religious or cultural holidays are also important events.

KEY PRACTICES FOR HEAD START PROGRAMS: Learn about the traditions and holidays celebrated by the families. These can be unique to the family's native country or region so it shouldn't be assumed that every Latino family celebrates the same holidays in the same way. Invite parents into the classroom to share ways they prepare for and celebrate holidays.

- **CULTURAL SNAPSHOT:** Regardless of cultural background and traditions, parents are the experts on their children's interests, abilities, favorite foods, health, etc. Family activities, disciplinary approaches, meal schedules, foods and home decorations vary from one culture to another. Like other children in poverty, Hispanic children may not have access to many books or developmentally appropriate toys that promote literacy, language and cognitive development.

KEY PRACTICES FOR HEAD START PROGRAMS: During home visits, ask the parents to show you the child's room to get a sense of the kinds of toys, games and activities that the child participates in at home. Ask parents about the meal schedule and the kind of foods eaten each day. Learn about the family's approach to discipline. Ask about literacy activities practiced regularly including oral story telling, reading aloud to children and the availability of books, magazines and other literacy materials.

- **CULTURAL SNAPSHOT:** In the Latino culture, fathers typically are responsible to provide for and protect the family. Mothers usually maintain the household and are directly responsible for child care.

KEY PRACTICES FOR HEAD START PROGRAMS: Learn about the roles and responsibilities of each member of the family. Invite parents to photograph themselves at work, at home and doing activities with their children. Encourage children to express their understanding about family roles through art, music, dramatic play, block play and other classroom activities.

Classroom Environment

- **CULTURAL SNAPSHOT:** Classrooms may be lacking in the number and kind of materials needed to effectively reflect diverse cultures.

KEY PRACTICES FOR HEAD START PROGRAMS: Companies that offer a good variety of culturally diverse products such as play foods, costumes, puzzles and bilingual books include Kaplan, Creative Diversity, Lakeshore and Constructive Playthings. Trinity Books offers a large number of high quality non-fiction children's books with information in English and Spanish. NAEYC offers helpful teacher resources at very reasonable prices.

- **CULTURAL SNAPSHOT:** Children adjust best to the dominant culture through carefully guided exposure.

KEY PRACTICES FOR HEAD START PROGRAMS: Arrange field trips to local fire stations, libraries, museums and other places in your community. Invite bilingual police officers, dental hygienists and other community workers to visit your classroom to describe their jobs.

- **CULTURAL SNAPSHOT:** Hispanic children may have little or no experience with professional dental or medical care. This can result in fear or apprehension about going to a doctor or dentist or even a fear of dental and visual screenings done at Head Start.

KEY PRACTICES FOR HEAD START PROGRAMS: Take time to introduce children to the roles of dentists, doctors and nurses. Teach children about the importance of dental health. Help them understand specific tools and procedures used by health professionals. Provide stethoscopes, tooth brushing puppets and other (toy) medical and dental tools for pretend play.

- **CULTURAL SNAPSHOT:** In most Latino cultures, corn, rice and beans are staple foods. In Mexico, for example, tortillas made of corn meal are often served at every meal and may be supplemented with meat, soup and various sauces such as salsa. Children in Head Start classrooms may be unfamiliar with the foods served for breakfast, lunch and snacks.

KEY PRACTICES FOR HEAD START PROGRAMS: Take time to talk about the foods being served for breakfast, lunch and snacks. Be sensitive to the possibility that the foods may be unfamiliar to some children. In some cultures, forks and knives are not used routinely. Help children learn to use these utensils at meals and provide them in your dramatic play area along with utensils from the children's cultures.

- **CULTURAL SNAPSHOT:** In Head Start classrooms, teachers tend to provide children with primary colors of paint, markers, crayons and paper. Children from other regions in the world, such as desert areas, may not relate to these colors and may prefer earth tones such as browns, greens, blues and dark reds.

KEY PRACTICES FOR HEAD START PROGRAMS: Provide a variety of colored materials and allow children to mix paints to achieve colors that better represent their native environments. It is important for children to be encouraged to express their own culture and heritage in the art they create.

- **CULTURAL SNAPSHOT:** Each country and culture has its own group of famous people and special celebrations. Did you know that not all Latino people celebrate Cinco de Mayo? Did you know that most Latino countries celebrate different “independence days”?

KEY PRACTICES FOR HEAD START PROGRAMS: Make the effort to learn and teach about the famous inventors, musicians, artists and other people who are highly regarded by the children and families in your classroom. Teach cultural concepts in integrated units rather than focusing on one culture at a time. Ask parents to share information about their cultural contributions and bring in samples of their music, art or other work. Host a “My Favorite Famous Person” event during which each child can share a drawing, song or mini-speech about someone admired in his or her culture.

- **CULTURAL SNAPSHOT:** Latino cultures are rich with traditional and modern art, music and dance.

KEY PRACTICES FOR HEAD START PROGRAMS: Have music available in the classroom that promotes each child’s home language and culture. Invite parents or community groups to demonstrate (and involve children in) traditional dances. Encourage children to express their cultural heritage in art projects. Arrange an art show to display their work.

- **CULTURAL SNAPSHOT:** Labeling furniture, centers and materials in the languages spoken by children in the classroom is important because it shows that all languages are recognized and valued. It can be helpful to color-code different languages.

KEY PRACTICES FOR HEAD START PROGRAMS: Most North Carolina Head Start teachers are used to labeling in English and Spanish. Think about ways you can extend this important process. Do you provide Word Wall vocabulary in at least two languages? Do you have pictures or posters of children and families representing race, age, gender, culture, ethnicity and differing abilities? Do your books, puzzles, play foods and other materials represent varied cultures?

Screening and Assessment

- **CULTURAL SNAPSHOT:** Screening and assessment instruments that have not included Hispanic children in the standardization process and that are not available in the child's native language may not provide accurate information about the child's developmental strengths and weaknesses.
KEY PRACTICES FOR HEAD START PROGRAMS: Use recognized screening and assessment tools that include Hispanic children in the standardization process. Administer the assessment in the child's native language each time it is done. If desired, you can also assess the child in English as his language proficiency increases.

- **CULTURAL SNAPSHOT:** Parents may not have the level of English language proficiency required to understand the screen and assessment results.
KEY PRACTICES FOR HEAD START PROGRAMS: Provide information and reports about assessment results in the parents' native language. If necessary, employ the services of a qualified translator to explain educational terms used in the assessment reports.

- **CULTURAL SNAPSHOT:** Portfolio assessment is a developmentally and linguistically appropriate approach to assessing the progress bilingual children. Observations and performance samples collected in systematic ways in the context of the learning environment can provide teachers with genuine information that can be used to plan learning opportunities and activities across the Domains.
KEY PRACTICES FOR HEAD START PROGRAMS: Portfolio and observation assessment should be regarded as a continuous process. Record observations of children throughout the day as they interact with others and explore materials. Use the information gathered at various times of the school day and in various settings to identify each child's learning style preferences and areas for skill development. Encourage parents to create journals of their observations of the child at home. Take time during home visits and conferences to share observations and develop shared goals for the child.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS AND BILINGUALISM

Children may be exposed to a second language in different ways and at different ages. They may grow up in homes where English and a second language are spoken. They may grow up in a home where English is not spoken and their only exposure to English occurs in school, the community, or television and other public media. Whatever the situation, learning two languages can be beneficial in life and is commonly easier for young children to accomplish than it is for adults. Studies show that an infant is born with the ability to speak any language. Babies who are raised in bilingual homes learn both languages simultaneously as a result of being exposed to two languages. In fact, young children can learn to “code-switch”²¹ and speak in the language dictated by the situation. For example, they may speak English to teachers and friends in school but speak Spanish at home.

English Language Acquisition for children not raised in bilingual settings occurs predictably in four stages. The Head Start English Language Learners Project (HELLP) and researchers such as Tabors and Snow (1994)²² identify the four stages of second language acquisition as follows:

- **STAGE:** The Pre-production Stage (Silent or Observant Period) The stage lasts from several months to more than a year.

CHARACTERISTICS: The child realizes that the native language doesn't always work so he stops using it and enters into a silent period. While silent, the child is building receptive language skills. He may use a few familiar words for objects and actions such as colors, numbers and words needed to communicate needs or desires.

- **STAGE:** The Early Production Stage (Telegraphic and Formulaic Language) The stage lasts from a several months to a few years.

CHARACTERISTICS: The child has been exposed to the new language and has opportunities to use it. She produces a few single words or simple phrases in English. The child's understanding is increased in familiar circumstances and she relies on routines and predictable activities for context clues.

■ **STAGE:** The Speech Emergence Stage (Period of Expanded Production)

The stage lasts from two to four years.

CHARACTERISTICS: The child produces more complex, longer phrases and has more extensive vocabulary. His use of English grammar is developing and he is using complete sentences. The child's involvement in small and large group activities is increased.

■ **STAGE:** The Intermediate Fluency Stage (Period of Creative Expanded Production)

CHARACTERISTICS: The child is more comfortable and confident. She is able to speak her native language and English and may translate for family and friends. She understands and uses humor. The child continues to develop vocabulary and the use of more complex language. She participates fully in classroom activities.

While the four stages have distinct attributes, children may revert to previous stages or previous strategies at times. The more the native language develops, the better the second language will develop. Teachers and other program staff should be familiar with the stages and their characteristics in order to support acquisition of the child's second language. In the classroom setting, HELLP recommends specific strategies for each stage. The following list shows a few of these strategies:

1. Pre-production

- a. Use props and puppets when telling stories and reading books.
- b. Use charts and graphs to illustrate concepts.
- c. Use gestures and facial expressions to demonstrate what you are saying.
- d. Provide hands-on opportunities for children to interact nonverbally.
- e. Use visuals and pictures throughout the environment (such as pictorial schedules, illustrated labels for centers, sets of cards with pictures of routines like eating, toileting and putting on a coat).
- f. Whenever possible, arrange the assistance of an adult who speaks the child's native language.

- g. Allow children to use their native language and make every effort to understand and respond to the child.
- h. Show respect for the child's home language by using color, shape, number and other words along with English.
- i. Allow children to play and socialize in their native language and look for opportunities to support their verbal and social interactions with English-speaking children.
- j. Use close-ended questions with children in this stage.

2. Early Production

- a. Incorporate the "five senses" into lessons and activities.
- b. Combine gestures and facial expressions with talk.
- c. Use the classroom schedule and routines to provide consistency and predictability.
- d. Read books with predictable text and continue to use props and puppets to support comprehension of literature. Incorporate finger plays and familiar songs into activities.
- e. Use repetition to give children more than one opportunity to understand what is being said.
- f. Ask simple questions that lead to "what, who, where, when and which" responses.
- g. Pair English language learners with children whose primary language is English.

3. Speech Emergence

- a. Read the same book and sing the same songs many times.
- b. Provide body language, gestures, and facial expression cues during activities and routines.
- c. Have books available in the child's native language. Provide props and puppets for children to use in pretend reading and play.

- d. Do more reading in small groups and less with large groups of children.
- e. Interrupt reading with open-ended questions to make sure children know what is happening in the book and to help them predict what might happen next.
- f. Use modeling, rephrasing and language expansion in your interactions with the child.

Head Start programs can support those families of English language learners wishing to nurture the development of the child's native language and acquisition of the second language. Head Start staff can remind parents of the value of being bilingual in today's global society. Currently, one in every 5 jobs requires knowledge of a second language. Ask parents to actively support their children's primary language development by encouraging them to interact and express themselves in that language. Invite parents to share ideas for integrating their language and culture into classroom activities and events.

CHILD NUTRITION

- **CULTURAL SNAPSHOT:** In Hispanic countries, family meal and eating patterns vary from what is common in the United States. Breakfast is usually light and lunch is the main meal of the day. The mid-day and evening meals are important family or social events.

KEY PRACTICES FOR HEAD START PROGRAMS: Invite families to share information about their meal and eating patterns. Help children adjust to the program schedule of meals and make meals highly social occasions by sitting with the children and facilitating genuine conversation.

- **CULTURAL SNAPSHOT:** Corn, rice, beans, fruit, onions, tomatoes, squash and peppers are among the traditional Latino foods. Chicken, beef, pork, bananas, oranges, papayas, mangos and cactus products are also eaten. Deep frying of some foods, along with unbalanced diets, can lead to child and adult obesity and Type 2 Diabetes.

KEY PRACTICES FOR HEAD START PROGRAMS: In recent years, there has been an increase in obesity and Type 2 diabetes among Hispanic Americans. In 2005, the Spanish food pyramid was developed by the USDA in order to provide detailed information regarding healthy eating. Information and resources are available to educators at www.nutritionexplorations.org. This site, Educators: Journey into Nutrition Education, has excellent interactive and printable resources in Spanish. (see Appendix C)

- **CULTURAL SNAPSHOT:** Culturally relevant food service means that meals should include foods that are familiar to the children and that the foods should be served and eaten in a similar way to that of the home environment.

KEY PRACTICES FOR HEAD START PROGRAMS: Plan to serve traditional Hispanic foods on a regular basis. In many Hispanic households, families gather together to eat meals. This experience is supported by the Head Start commitment to provide “family style” meals.

MENTAL HEALTH

- **CULTURAL SNAPSHOT:** Modesty and privacy are important in many Latino cultures. Coupled with religious beliefs, the result is that Latino people may be reluctant to share mental health concerns, even with family and friends.

KEY PRACTICES FOR HEAD START PROGRAMS: Use less direct approaches to mental health issues. For example, “People cope with grief in different ways. Some people withdraw from their friends and family. It can help to talk to someone who isn’t part of the situation,” etc.

- **CULTURAL SNAPSHOT:** Children are typically highly valued in Hispanic families. Parents may be openly affectionate toward their children. However, in some homes children may be expected “to be seen, not heard”.

KEY PRACTICES FOR HEAD START PROGRAMS: Recognize that values and traditions have a major effect on the way parents choose to raise their children. Express respect for the family’s child-rearing approach. Then share information about the importance of child-parent interactions in promoting language and social/emotional development.

- **CULTURAL SNAPSHOT:** Parenting and discipline practices are heavily influenced by family traditions and cultural beliefs.

KEY PRACTICES FOR HEAD START PROGRAMS: Head Start program discipline policies should be provided in English and the family's home language. Take time to explain the policy components in detail and answer parents' questions before asking them to sign it. Keep in mind the family's traditions and beliefs about privacy when providing parenting classes. Take time to explain which practices are acceptable in the home culture that may not be acceptable in the dominant American culture.

FAMILY PARTNERSHIPS

- **CULTURAL SNAPSHOT:** Culturally and linguistically appropriate communication is critical when working with diverse families. Trust, sensitivity and an assurance of confidentiality are also important.

KEY PRACTICES FOR HEAD START PROGRAMS: Determine if your conversations with the family will benefit from the presence of an interpreter. Ask the family if there is someone they know and trust who will serve as translator for your meetings. Work to build rapport and trust with the family.

- **CULTURAL SNAPSHOT:** Hispanics may be more likely to seek help from the church, extended family members and trusted friends than from social service or government resources. When family members are undocumented, they may avoid talking with you or providing needed information.

KEY PRACTICES FOR HEAD START PROGRAMS: Make sure parents know what you do. Give parents the information they need when they need it and in a way that they can understand.

- **CULTURAL SNAPSHOT:** Latino families often place high value on being polite, pleasant and respectful of those they consider to be in positions of authority. They may not express concerns or objections when you tell them they must obtain documents such as immunization records or birth certificates.

KEY PRACTICES FOR HEAD START PROGRAMS: Make sure parents know what to do and how to do it. Ask them to repeat to you what they hear. Make sure they have the necessary understanding, communication skills and transportation to complete the activity.

■ **CULTURAL SNAPSHOT:** Hispanics have the highest uninsured rates of any racial or ethnic group within the United States. In part, this is due to the fact that many work in agricultural jobs. Others may be concerned that there is an inherent danger in applying for public assistance because they are undocumented.

KEY PRACTICES FOR HEAD START PROGRAMS: Be sensitive to the family's concerns. Undocumented families may have a fear of applying to government agencies for Medicaid, WIC and other government services.

■ **CULTURAL SNAPSHOT:** English language fluency in Latino populations is dependent on many factors including ethnic background, whether the family members are 1st, 2nd, or 3rd generation residents and educational background. As their years of residence in the United States increase, there may be a risk of young people losing the native language. This could result in a communication disconnect between generations.

KEY PRACTICES FOR HEAD START PROGRAMS: Be respectful of the family's language, culture and traditions. Keep in mind that by supporting the native language, possible future breaks between English-speaking children and their Spanish-speaking relatives can be avoided.

■ **CULTURAL SNAPSHOT:** According to a 2006 U.S. Census Bureau report, 55% of Hispanics (compared to 85% non-Hispanic whites) have high school diplomas. Lower levels of education, economic situations and cultural differences in child-rearing practices may mean that reading to children might not be a common practice among Latino families.

KEY PRACTICES FOR HEAD START PROGRAMS: Work with parents to build their understanding of the importance of family literacy practices. Ask parents if they have children's literature at home. Encourage them to get public library cards and read to their children on a daily basis. Offer lists of available bilingual books as well as tips for reading to their children.

- **CULTURAL SNAPSHOT:** Many Hispanic families become aware (through community centers, newspapers, churches and word of mouth) of special programs and events that are open to the community as a whole.
KEY PRACTICES FOR HEAD START PROGRAMS: Establish relationships with your Hispanic families and invite them to share information about special events scheduled in your community. Help parents create bilingual flyers to inform families about these opportunities.

- **CULTURAL SNAPSHOT:** Many Latinos may need to develop their ability to speak English in order to live and work in the community. Some might have opportunities for better jobs if they earned a GED or took college classes.
KEY PRACTICES FOR HEAD START PROGRAMS: Survey families to identify their current levels of English language acquisition and their goals for improving language skills. Then design and offer English as a Second Language classes tailored to meet the various needs of the participants. Ask community partners to provide bilingual volunteers to teach the classes.

- **CULTURAL SNAPSHOT:** In addition to developing skill in speaking English, many families need support in building family literacy skills and in acquiring appropriate materials and books to use in working with their children.
KEY PRACTICES FOR HEAD START PROGRAMS: Implement a monthly “perfect attendance” reward system in your program. Provide a bilingual book and a certificate to each child who has perfect attendance during the month.

- **CULTURAL SNAPSHOT:** Many undocumented immigrant parents have children who were born in the United States and are, therefore, U. S. citizens. Parents may worry about their immigration status and be seeking information about becoming legal residents or citizens.
KEY PRACTICES FOR HEAD START PROGRAMS: Arrange for at least one Head Start family service worker to be the immigration “information resource” who arranges for Hispanic families to get needed services and information. Establish a collaboration with an immigration attorney in the community who will offer advice to families free of charge. (This is an excellent opportunity for professional services “in-kind”)

THE VALUES AMERICANS LIVE BY

Have you ever examined the attitudes and beliefs that drive your behavior every day? L. Robert Kohls (1984), Executive Director, The Washington International Center, Washington, compared typical American values and beliefs with those of other cultures. The information, based on more than thirty years of experience introducing foreigners to the United States, can provide Americans with interesting food for thought. The following chart shows typical American values paired with values held by people in other cultures. Further explanation is provided below. Use the chart to think about your own values and to consider the biases and stereotypes that you may hold towards others. Think about ways these values may affect ways your work with families of other cultures and the ways they work with you.

U. S. Values

Personal Control over the Environment
Change
Time and Its Control
Equality
Individualism/Privacy
Self-Help
Competition
Future Orientation
Action/Work Orientation
Informality
Directness/Openness/Honesty
Practicality/Efficiency
Materialism/Acquisitiveness

Some Other Country Values

Fate
Tradition
Human Interaction
Hierarchy/Rank/Status
Group's Welfare
Birthright Inheritance
Cooperation
Past/Present Orientation
"Being" Orientation
Formality
Indirectness/Ritual/"Face"
Idealism
Spiritualism/Detachment



Americans tend to believe they should have control over their own lives. They may even believe that they can control nature. They have overcome the laws of gravity to send a man to the moon. They study hurricanes, tornadoes, earthquakes and volcanoes to build control over the consequences of these natural threats. By contrast, many others in the world have more of a “what will be, will be” attitude towards life’s events.

.....

Americans tend to think of change as a good thing
New opportunities, progress and accomplishments are exciting
to Americans. In many other cultures, people feel more
comfortable with tradition rather than the disruption of change.

.....

The average American checks a watch or clock quite often each day. Being on time and getting tasks done on schedule are important values. In contrast, time in some other cultures is less important.

.....

Equality is an important civic and social goal for Americans. Some of our most respected leaders, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., President Lincoln, and others, are held in high regard because of their belief and work in building equality. In other cultures, people may consider social rank and status as more desirable than universal equality important than relationships. People are more likely to prioritize finishing a conversation with a friend over getting to the next meeting on time.

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It is common for Americans to “want their own space,” have “me time,” and expect privacy in the home and work environments. Americans may feel comfortable expressing their own opinions or may believe that their opinions are unique. In other cultures, privacy and individualism may not be important. Privacy may be seen as “isolated and lonely.” Many also believe that the needs of large groups outweigh the needs of an individual person important than relationships. People are more likely to prioritize finishing a conversation with a friend over getting to the next meeting on time.

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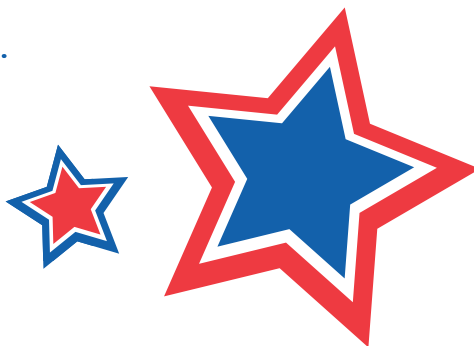
Americans may pride themselves in being different from everyone else.

L. Robert Kohls points to the number of words in English that have “self” as a prefix. Think about the meaning behind “self-confidence,” “self-respect” and “self-esteem” to name a few. In other cultures, this level of privacy and individualism is rare.

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Competition is introduced to Americans at a very young age. Think about the number of sports programs such as soccer and tee-ball that are provided for young children. Our schools have assessment systems that foster competitiveness and our economic system is built on the value of competing successfully against others. Other cultures prize cooperativeness over competitiveness.

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Americans tend to plan and prepare for the future. In schools, it is common for children to be reminded of the skills and accomplishments they will need to get into good colleges. When entering the workforce, young adults are encouraged to begin a retirement fund to prepare for the future. In other cultures, people may not plan for the future like Americans. In fact, in some religious groups, planning in this way is considered sinful important than relationships. People are more likely to prioritize finishing a conversation with a friend over getting to the next meeting on time.

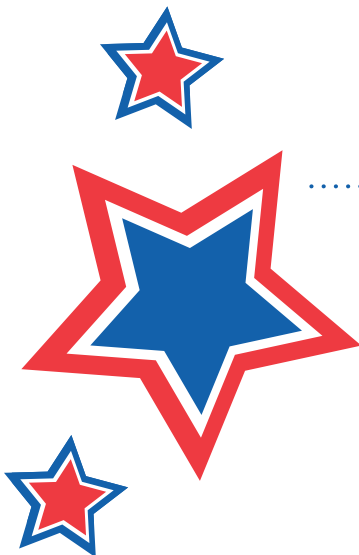
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People in America may be closely associated with what they do for work and how much they work. Recreation is seen as a reward for hard work. People are expected to work hard and may even “work hard” during their activity-packed vacations. In other cultures, work may be a responsibility attached to the importance of caring for family.

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Americans tend to be less formal in the ways they greet others; and in the ways they dress for work, social gatherings, and religious activities compared to those of other cultures. It can be unsettling for people from other cultures to see people at work dressed in jeans and t-shirts or for authority figures and others to address them by their first names.

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Americans may be very direct and revealing in their interactions. They may argue their views and share negative opinions of others and their behavior. We even take classes in being assertive. In other cultures, people may be less likely to be open with others about health and mental health issues, disabilities, opinions of the behavior of colleagues, family members and friends and indirect with bad news. Consider how this approach might affect a conversation between a foreigner and a health provider who needs specific information about a concern!

.....

People in America tend to look at decision-making from a practical point of view. They will consider if the decision is logical or if it will bring personal or monetary gain. They approach problem-solving systematically and will try one solution after another until they attain a goal. This was certainly Edison’s approach to inventing the light bulb! People from other cultures are more likely to take into account more aesthetic and emotional considerations. They might consider if the solution to a problem will be enjoyable or helpful in building knowledge and experience.

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It is not uncommon for many Americans to own a lot of things. Americans may have many possessions that are not critical to everyday life. Americans may value new things and may upgrade electronics and other items just to have the most current version. In other cultures, acquiring new or fancier things is not as important as it is to Americans. A truck that serves the needed family function is valued even when it is “outdated”

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It is critical that the values outlined above are not regarded as right or wrong. Instead, they should be recognized as differences in the approaches taken to address many of life's situations. Awareness of these values should inform the approach that your Head Start program takes to delivering services such as parent meetings, classroom instruction, and family partnership agreements. Culture and values drive human behavior consciously and unconsciously. Head Start staff need to be aware of their own beliefs and practices and make it a priority to understand these in the families they serve.

SERVICES FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

- **CULTURAL SNAPSHOT:** It can be difficult to determine if a child has a disability when the child's native language is not English.
KEY PRACTICES FOR HEAD START PROGRAMS: Ensure that assessments are done by bilingual professionals who fully understand the child's cultural background and who use linguistically, culturally and age-appropriate screening and evaluation instruments.

- **CULTURAL SNAPSHOT:** Religious beliefs may impact the family's perspectives about parenting and educating children with disabilities. In some Hispanic countries, disabled children may drop out of school at a young age and be cared for by their families throughout their lives.
KEY PRACTICES FOR HEAD START PROGRAMS: Help parents understand that early intervention practices are important in supporting the child in learning social, academic and life skills. Provide information concerning disabilities and interventions in the home language. Explain the IFSP and IEP processes in detail and encourage parents to participate fully.

- **CULTURAL SNAPSHOT:** Child-rearing practices vary among cultures. Some behaviors may be misinterpreted as inappropriate when, in fact, they may be considered normal for the child's culture.

KEY PRACTICES FOR HEAD START PROGRAMS: Be careful to differentiate between emotional and behavioral concerns and child-rearing practices. Before referring a child for further evaluation, discuss the behavior(s) with the parents in the context of the home. Then decide if parenting education or a referral would be the next appropriate step.

- **CULTURAL SNAPSHOT:** Immigrant families may not be familiar with the referral, evaluation, eligibility and placement processes mandated by IDEA.

KEY PRACTICES FOR HEAD START PROGRAMS: Provide linguistically appropriate information to parents of children with suspected disabilities, ADHD, health impairments and other concerns regarding the evaluation, diagnosis and service options available. Ask parents of children with identified disabilities if they are interested in support groups or other resources to help them understand the child's diagnosis and work effectively with the child at home.

- **CULTURAL SNAPSHOT:** Lack of understanding of language development and the use of inappropriate assessment tools may lead to a misdiagnosis or over-diagnosis of speech and language concerns. True language development concerns may be overlooked.

KEY PRACTICES FOR HEAD START PROGRAMS: In administering screening, assessment and evaluation tools, use only culturally and linguistically appropriate tools that provide an accurate picture of the child's language, cognitive and social development. Parents are an important and valid source of information about their children's language development.

PROGRAM GOVERNANCE

Governing Bodies and Committees

- **CULTURAL SNAPSHOT:** Bicultural and bilingual community representatives and parents are valuable resources on policy councils, parent committees and advisory committees.
KEY PRACTICES FOR HEAD START PROGRAMS: Ensure that the number of bicultural and bilingual members of governing bodies and advisory committees reflect the program demographics.

- **CULTURAL SNAPSHOT:** Translation services promote understanding and involvement of participants.
KEY PRACTICES FOR HEAD START PROGRAMS: Build partnerships with community agencies and other resources that can provide high quality translation services during meetings of governing bodies, parent committees and advisory committees.

- **CULTURAL SNAPSHOT:** It is the responsibility of governing bodies to review and revise policies implemented throughout the program. Existing policies may not reflect the changing needs of children and families.
KEY PRACTICES FOR HEAD START PROGRAMS: Review and revise policies to both respond to the needs of diverse children and families and to impact them in a positive way.

Communication

- **CULTURAL SNAPSHOT:** Parents benefit from receiving information including parent handbooks, health alerts, newsletters and other information in their home language.
KEY PRACTICES FOR HEAD START PROGRAMS: Utilize qualified translators to provide all written communications in the home languages of the families.

- **CULTURAL SNAPSHOT:** Hispanic families may rely on information received by “word of mouth” in the community rather than by formal written communications.
KEY PRACTICES FOR HEAD START PROGRAMS: Consider developing a phone tree system to communicate important information to non-English speaking families.

Community Assessment

- **CULTURAL SNAPSHOT:** The Hispanic population in North Carolina is growing and changing rapidly. Traditionally, many Hispanics in the state were migrant farmers but now employment has moved into food service, construction, landscaping and other industries. To support the changing population, Head Start programs must examine its impact on early care, education, mental health, health and family service needs.

KEY PRACTICES FOR HEAD START PROGRAMS: Design detailed Community Assessment tools that will accurately reflect the cultural values and languages of children and families who qualify for services. Refer to the Head Start Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center for guidance.

Five Steps to Community Assessment: Workbook for Head Start and Early Head Start Programs Serving Hispanic and Other Emerging Populations. HHS/ACF/OHS. 2008.

- **CULTURAL SNAPSHOT:** The Community Assessment process is an important source of information about the cultural and linguistic backgrounds represented in the community.

KEY PRACTICES FOR HEAD START PROGRAMS: Utilize bicultural and bilingual community representatives and parents in conducting the Community Assessment and in analyzing the resulting data.

Self-Assessment

- **CULTURAL SNAPSHOT:** Parents and community representatives who represent various ethnic and cultural groups in the community bring an important perspective to the Self-Assessment process.

KEY PRACTICES FOR HEAD START PROGRAMS: Actively recruit bicultural and bilingual participants for each Self-Assessment team to facilitate communication from families about the appropriateness and effectiveness of program services.

- **CULTURAL SNAPSHOT:** Tools used to complete the Self-Assessment are valuable if they are designed to capture the effectiveness of services in meeting the diverse needs of all children and families.

KEY PRACTICES FOR HEAD START PROGRAMS: Design detailed program self-assessment tools that will accurately reflect the cultural values and languages of the children and families who qualify for services.

HUMAN RESOURCES AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT

- **CULTURAL SNAPSHOT:** Information and news in Hispanic communities may be shared by word of mouth. Families also read newspapers published in their native language.

KEY PRACTICES FOR HEAD START PROGRAMS: When recruiting bilingual staff, bring together a group of active parents in the program and explain the job requirements. Ask them to help you get the information out into the community. Contact a local Hispanic outreach center or churches and ask for help posting the job in the community.

- **CULTURAL SNAPSHOT:** Bilingual skills are critical to the program's success in working with children and families.

KEY PRACTICES FOR HEAD START PROGRAMS: Increase compensation for staff members who are bilingual.

- **CULTURAL SNAPSHOT:** Latino mothers are usually the primary caregivers of their children. Women often have the responsibility of taking care of the home and cooking the meals.

KEY PRACTICES FOR HEAD START PROGRAMS: Consider the home responsibilities of potential staff members. If necessary, hire two people to work half day schedules so their home responsibilities can be met. You may need to allow for a very flexible schedule of working hours to support bilingual needs for parent committee meetings, policy council meetings, home visits, conferences and other translation tasks.

- **CULTURAL SNAPSHOT:** Head Start programs tend to think of hiring bilingual staff members to function primarily as translators.

KEY PRACTICES FOR HEAD START PROGRAMS: Review and revise job descriptions for bilingual staff to include specific responsibilities for working with children and families who speak languages other than English.

- **CULTURAL SNAPSHOT:** Stereotypes, biases and lack of knowledge about various cultures can be a barrier to culturally competent programming across all Head Start program components.

KEY PRACTICES FOR HEAD START PROGRAMS: Involve each employee in assessing his or her level of cultural competence and in setting personal and professional goals for growth. Develop effective strategies for training staff to recognize cultural bias and to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate services to children and families.

Program Preparedness CHECKLIST

SERVING DUAL LANGUAGE LEARNERS AND THEIR FAMILIES (Version 2)

From the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration
for Children and Families – <http://www.eclkc.ohs.scf.hhs.gov>

The following checklist can be used as a tool for program self-assessment and strategic planning. It can also be used to identify professional development and program service needs. To adapt it to the unique needs of your own program, Head Start program staff members are encouraged to add other indicators to the checklist.

Item	Definitely	In Progress	Not Yet	Comment/ Examples
PROGRAM GOVERNANCE				
We promote the involvement of families who speak languages other than English into all aspects of program governance. We...				
• Provide interpretation at Parent Policy Council meetings				
• Have proportionate representation in the policy groups that reflect the demographics of the children in the program.				
PLANNING				
We have policies and procedures in place to support quality service delivery to families and children who speak languages other than English. We...				
• Implement an organizational language policy that explains how we use language in the classrooms, how we promote children's home language and support English language development.				
• Incorporate how we will meet the needs of families and children who speak languages other than English into the work plans for each service area.				

• Ensure that families who speak languages other than English are involved in developing policies and procedures related to dual language learners.				
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COMMUNICATION

We have systems in place to support effective and ongoing communication with all families. We...

• Provide written communications to families in their primary or preferred language.				
• Are knowledgeable of national and state level interpretation and translation associations and follow recommended guidelines.				
• Provide interpretation at meetings, trainings and other agency events to ensure all families can understand what is being presented.				
• Have a process in place for families to communicate with us and provide feedback in their home or preferred language.				

HUMAN RESOURCES

We strive to employ a linguistically and culturally Diverse staff who are familiar with the ethnic and language backgrounds of the children and families. We...

• Actively recruit staff that are bilingual and or bicultural				
• Provide additional compensation for staff who are bilingual				
• Include position-specific responsibilities for working with children and families who speak languages other than English in the job descriptions.				

• Assist staff in getting transcripts from coursework taken in other countries analyzed and accepted by higher education institutions.				
• Assess the language proficiency of staff to ensure they are able to meet the requirements of the position for which they are hired.				
We provide on-going professional development opportunities to staff so that they are fully prepared to support the optimal development of children and families who speak languages other than English. We...				
• Provide training to staff on the stages of first and second language acquisition.				
• Provide training to staff to promote cultural competence and examine how cultural perspectives on child-rearing vary.				
• Partner with institutions of higher education to ensure that information on working with families and children who speak languages other than English is infused throughout the coursework.				
SELF-ASSESSMENT				
We incorporate evaluation of our level and quality of services to families and children who speak languages other than English into the annual self-assessment. We...				
• Have family members who speak languages other than English on the self-assessment team.				
• Evaluate each service area's effectiveness in meeting the needs of the children and families who speak languages other than English.				

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze children's assessment data to determine how we are promoting positive child outcomes for dual language learners in accordance with the Head Start Child Outcomes Framework. 				
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ENVIRONMENTS

We provide an inclusive classroom environment that reflects the language(s) and the culture(s) of the children and families in the program. We...

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Display photographs of the children and families throughout the classroom. 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include materials and visuals in the classroom that are reflective of the cultures of the children and families. 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use books that include authentic images (photographs) reflective of the culture(s) of the children and families in the classroom. 				

TEACHER/CHILD INTERACTIONS

We promote children's home language development. We...

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gather information from families regarding the language(s) that are spoken in the home. 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use children's home language(s) when caring for infants and toddlers. 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide a classroom staff person who speaks the children's home language if more than half of the preschoolers share a home language that is other than English. 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learn key words and phrases in each preschooler's home language. 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learn how to pronounce each child's name correctly. 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have music available in the home language(s) of the children. 				

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilize small group time during the day to introduce and/or reinforce concepts in children's home language. 				
We provide opportunities for children's literacy development in the home language. We...				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Label the environment in the home language(s) of the children as well as in English. 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Color-code the labels in the various languages. 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Display and, when possible, read books in the home language(s) of the children. 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide opportunities for children to see and learn, when possible, the alphabet of their home language. 				
We promote children's acquisition of English. We...				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use gestures, body language, props and other visual cues to help aid children's comprehension when speaking to them in English. 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Select books in English that have easy-to-follow stories, rhymes, repetition and simple language. 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid simultaneous interpretation, wherein a staff person speaks to the children in English and then immediately repeats the same information in the home language. 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilize small group time during the day to support children learning English and facilitate conversation among children and between children and adults. 				
We promote positive social and emotional development of infants and toddlers from families who speak languages other than English. We...				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gather information from families about daily care-giving routines (sleeping, diapering, feeding, transitions). 				

• Replicate the familial care-giving routines in the classroom.				
• Interact with infants and toddlers in their home language.				
We promote positive social and emotional development of preschoolers who are dual language learners. We...				
• Pair up children who speak languages other than English with English-speaking children for some classroom activities to increase the comfort level of the dual language learners and help ease their transition.				
• Avoid using language such as “foreign”, “funny”, or “strange” when describing the home language(s) and communication style(s) of the children and families whose home language is other than English.				
• Provide a quiet area in the classroom where dual language learners can relax and take a break from the pressure of language learning.				
CURRICULUM				
We implement a research-based curriculum that is inclusive of children’s language and culture. We...				
• Connect learning to the children’s prior knowledge and life experiences.				
• Provide hands-on activities to make learning interactive and concrete.				
DISABILITIES				
We ensure that the process through which we screen children and provide services, if necessary, is inclusive and respectful of their language and culture. We...				
• Use linguistic and culturally appropriate screening tools.				

• Understand and can articulate how cultural perspectives may influenced families' beliefs about parenting children with disabilities.				
• Ensure that parents receive materials concerning disabilities in their home or preferred language and can fully participate in the IFSP/IEP process.				

ASSESSMENT

We plan and individualize for dual language learners, using information gained from culturally and linguistically appropriate assessment tools. We...

• Perform authentic assessments based on ongoing observations of children in their natural environment				
• Assess children's overall development in their home language and English.				
• Assess preschool children's progress in acquiring English skills.				
• Work with interpreters, cultural mediators and/or other community members to assist in assessment if we don't speak the children's home language.				

HEALTH AND NUTRITION

We provide health and nutrition services that are inclusive of families' language and culture. We...

• Seek out information about health issues and needs relevant to the ethnic groups served in the program.				
• Solicit input from families to identify family eating patterns and cultural food preferences.				
• Serve a variety of cultural and ethnic foods based on information received from families.				

FAMILY PARTNERSHIPS

We actively promote families' involvement in their children's education. We...

• Invite family members into the classroom to share special talents				
• Encourage parents to share ideas to include in each classroom's curricular experiences & activities.				
• Have formalized systems such as curriculum committees to ensure parental input.				
• Provide trainings on developmentally appropriate practices and curriculum.				
• Help families to transition children smoothly into public school and ensure that they are aware of their rights and responsibilities.				
• Provide training to families on how to maximize their impact when volunteering in the classroom by promoting home language development through sharing songs, stories and interactions with the children.				

We support and promote ongoing family literacy efforts. We...

• Encourage family members to speak their home language to their children.				
• Provide trainings and information on how families can support their children's language and literacy development at home.				
• Receive grants to be able to give books to children and families in their home language and/or we familiarize families with the local library resources.				

• Provide information about where home language literacy classes for adults are offered or we provide those classes ourselves.				
• Provide information on English as a Second Language classes for adults or we offer those classes ourselves.				
• Provide training to families on the stages of first and second language acquisition.				
COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS				
We partner with community agencies to support the development of the children and families who speak languages other than English. We...				
• Have relationships with agencies, businesses, churches and other organizations to assist in outreach and recruitment of families who speak languages other than English.				
• Provide training to our community partners on the value of bilingual development, the benefits of a diverse workforce and society, and components of cultural competence.				
• Actively recruit members from the community who speak children's home language to volunteer in the program.				

Resources and References

Babelfish is a source of free, easy-to-use translation software. <http://www.babelfish.yahoo.com>. The user can choose to translate from one of many languages into another. Be aware that translation software is not always accurate so be sure to check your translations with a parent or other person who reads and writes the language.

Ballantyne, K., A. Sanderman, T. D'Emilio, N. McLaughlin. 2008. Dual Language Learners in the Early Years: Getting Ready to Succeed in School. Washington, DC: National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition. <http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/resabout/ecell/earlyyears.pdf>.

Bronheim, S., T. Goode, W. Jones. 2006. Cultural and Linguistic Competence in Family Supports. Washington, DC: National Center for Cultural Competence, Georgetown University Center for Child and Human Development. <http://www11.georgetown.edu/research/gucchd/nccc/documents/FamilySupports.pdf>.

Early Learning and Knowledge Center (ECLKC) at www.eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov.

Green Tobacco Sickness information and resources for other health issues are available at <http://www.pubmedcentral.nih.gov>, <http://www.nclabor.com> and <http://philipmorrisinternational.com>

Hernandez, D., N. Denton, S. Macartney. 2007. Children in Immigrant Families: The U.S. and 50 States: National Origins, Language, and Early Education. Albany, NY: Child Trends & The Center for Social and Demographic Analysis, University at Albany, SUNY. Online: http://mumford.albany.edu/children/img/Research_brief_1.pdf.

Hola Means Hello is a site offering resources and ideas for promoting diversity in early childhood settings. www.fpg.unc.edu/Hola/hola.htm.

Keyser, J. 2006. *From Parents to Partners: Building a Family-Centered Early Childhood Program*. Saint Paul, MN: Redleaf Press and NAEYC. <http://www.redleafpress.org>.

Maschinot, B. 2008. *The Changing Face of the United States: The Influence of Culture on Early Child Development*. Washington, DC: Zero to Three. Online: <http://www.zerotothree.org>.

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), 1509 16th Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20036-1426, *Responding to Linguistic and Cultural Diversity: Recommendations for Effective Early Childhood Education*. <http://www.naeyc.org>.

National Center for Cultural Competence, Georgetown University Center for Child and Human Development, P. O. Box 571485, Washington, DC 20057-1485, web site: <http://gucchd.georgetown.edu.nccc>.

National Center for Cultural Competence. 2004. *Planning for Cultural and Linguistic Competence in Systems of Care...for children & youth with social-emotional and behavioral disorders and their families*. Washington, DC: National Center for Cultural Competence, Georgetown University Center for Child and Human Development. Online: <http://www11.georgetown.edu/research>.

Nutrition Education materials, including charts showing nutritious foods in food pyramid food groups, are available at <http://www.nutritionexplorations.org>.

Program Preparedness Checklist: Version 2: Document available at <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov>. Search Program Preparedness Checklist in the Dual Language Learners and Their Families section.

Romero, M. 2008. *Promoting Tolerance and Respect for Diversity in Early Childhood. Toward a Research and Practice Agenda: A View from the Field*. New York, NY: National Center for Children in Poverty. http://www.nccp.org/publications/pub_814.html.

Seitzinger, K.H. 2005. Building Culturally and Linguistically Competent Services to Support Young Children, Their Families, and School Readiness. Baltimore, MD: Annie E. Casey Foundation.<https://folio.iupui.edu>.

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, The Office of Minority Health, web site: <http://www.omhrc.gov>.

University of North Carolina Greensboro Center for New North Carolinians (cnnc.uncg.edu) provides information, services and resources to the Hispanic community. Programs sponsored by the Center include Thriving at Three, Immigrant Health Access Program and the Lead Paint Education Project. Click Kaleidoscope to find information on values, attitudes and beliefs related to Language and Communication, Religion and Spirituality, Family, Relationships, Health Care, Mental Illness Customs and Lifestyle, Employment and Other Problems. An overview of these aspects of cultures is provided for a number of cultural groups.

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). <http://www.hrsa.gov>.

